

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4936

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRUSSELS 03033

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, EAID, CG, BE

SUBJECT: THE MOBUTU PLAN FOLLOWING MOBUTU'S VISIT TO
BELGIUM

REF: A) KINSHASA 1949, B) STATE 36810, C) BONN 2566,
D) BRUSSELS 1903

1. SUMMARY. IN THE WAKE OF MOBUTU'S VISIT TO BELGIUM
FEBRUARY 3-8, WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM TWO BELGIAN FOREIGN
MINISTRY SOURCES A DETAILED RUN-DOWN ON LATEST DEVELOP-
MENTS ON THE MOBUTU PLAN AND ON BELGIAN VIEWS AS TO HOW
THE COORDINATION SCENARIO FOR PLAN MIGHT GO.
KEY POINTS FOLLOW:

- MOBUTU IN BRUSSELS "FINALLY AGREED" TO AN IMF-APPOINTED
DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR THE BANK OF ZAIRE, I.E., THE
NUMBER-TWO MAN DIRECTLY UNDER THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNOR;
QUESTIONS OF HIS POWERS STILL TO BE WORKED OUT.
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- DEVELOPMENT MINISTER OUTERS AND FINANCE MINISTER GEENS
WILL PROBABLY GO TO WASHINGTON LATER THIS MONTH TO
DISCUSS THE MOBUTU PLAN WITH THE IMF, AS WELL AS WITH U.S.
AND WORLD BANK OFFICIALS.

- ZAIRIAN EXPERTS, LED BY BOKANA, WILL COME TO BRUSSELS

AROUND FEBRUARY 20 WITH LATEST DRAFT OF THE MOBUTU PLAN, INCLUDING "DETAILS AND FIGURES," AND WILL MEET AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL WITH BELGIAN EXPERTS OF MALDAGUE GROUP.

- MOBUTU HAS ALREADY SIGNED HIS LETTER TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND TO "FRIENDS OF ZAIRE" ASKING FOR THEIR

COOPERATION WITH THE MOBUTU PLAN. FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA WILL GO TO WASHINGTON AT THE END OF THE MONTH CARRYING THE LETTERS FOR THE U.S.G., IMF AND WORLD BANK.

- MOBUTU RECONFIRMED THAT ZAIRE WISHED BELGIUM "TO TAKE THE LEAD" IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS ON THE MOBUTU PLAN, AND PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS CONFIRMED BELGIUM'S WILLINGNESS TO TAKE ON THAT ROLE. IF ALL ARE STILL IN AGREEMENT, BELGIUM IS PREPARED TO CONVENE A MEETING IN BRUSSELS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND FRIENDS - PERHAPS AS EARLY AS MARCH - IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE MOBUTU PLAN AND THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS. BELGIUM WOULD APPRECIATE U.S. VIEWS ON THIS CONSULTATION.

- KEY UNKNOWN IN THE WHOLE MOBUTU PLAN SCENARIO IS THE OUTCOME OF THE IMF NEGOTIATIONS THAT ARE SCHEDULED TO OPEN
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IN KINSHASA IN MARCH. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING MOBUTU'S FEBRUARY 3-8 PRIVATE VISIT TO BRUSSELS AND FEBRUARY 9-10 MEETING OF THE BELGO-ZAIRE GRAND COMMISSION, WE GOT DETAILED RUN-DOWNS BOTH FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY'S AFRICAN DIRECTOR LEBRUN AND ALSO DEPUTY CHEF DE CABINET ONKELINX. BOTH SAID THAT KEY RESULT OF MOBUTU'S MEETINGS WITH THE BELGIANS WAS HIS AGREEMENT TO THE APPOINTMENT BY THE IMF OF THE NUMBER-TWO AT THE BANK OF ZAIRE, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, WHO WOULD BE THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OF THE BANK AND RANK DIRECTLY UNDER THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNOR. THE QUESTION OF THE PRECISE POWERS OF THIS DIRECTOR GENERAL WILL HAVE TO BE SPELLED OUT CONCRETELY, BUT ONKELINX SAID THAT MOBUTU FINALLY REALIZES THAT THIS OFFICER MUST HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO PUT THE BANK'S HOUSE IN ORDER. HE SAID THAT MOBUTU WILL ALSO ASK THE IMF TO SEND SOME TECHNICIANS TO HELP STAFF THE BANK, AND THAT BELGIUM ALSO IS WILLING TO PROVIDE SOME TECHNICIANS, ALTHOUGH A BELGIAN WILL EXPRESSLY NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR THE DIRECTOR GENERAL SLOT.

3. A ZAIRIAN TEAM UNDER BOKANA WILL COME TO BRUSSELS

AROUND FEBRUARY 20 AND MEET WITH BELGIAN EXPERTS OF THE MALDAGUE GROUP. ONKELINX SAID THAT BOKANA WILL BRING WITH HIM THE LATEST DRAFT OF THE MOBUTU PLAN, INCLUDING "DETAILS AND FIGURES." ABOUT THE SAME TIME, DEVELOPMENT MINISTER OUTERS AND FINANCE MINISTER GEENS "PROBABLY" WILL MAKE THEIR MUCH ANTICIPATED TRIP TO WASHINGTON, WHERE THEY WILL MEET WITH U.S., IMF AND WORLD BANK OFFICIALS.

4. ONKELYNX SAID THAT MOBUTU HAS ALREADY SIGNED THE LETTERS

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TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND "FRIENDS OF ZAIRE"
ASKING THEIR COOPERATION WITH THE MOBUTU PLAN, BUT THERE
IS STILL SOME QUESTION AS TO HOW AND WHEN THESE LETTERS
WILL BE DELIVERED. IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED THAT THE LETTERS
TO FRANCE AND THE FRG WOULD HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP FROM
KINSHASA AND DELIVERED DURING MOBUTU'S PARIS AND BONN
STOPS, BUT THIS TURNED OUT NOT TO BE THE CASE. FOREIGN
MINISTER UMBA IS EXPECTED TO GO TO WASHINGTON AT THE END
OF FEBRUARY AND DELIVER LETTERS TO THE U.S., THE WORLD
BANK AND THE IMF. U.K. POLITICAL OFFICER SUBSEQUENTLY
TOLD US THAT UMBA IS NOW SCHEDULED TO VISIT FOREIGN SECRE-
TARY OWEN IN LONDON FEBRUARY 22-24 AND WILL DELIVER THE
MOBUTU LETTER AT THAT TIME.

5. ONKELINX TOLD US THAT MOBUTU ASKED AGAIN THAT BELGIUM
ASSUME A COORDINATING ROLE WITH THE MOBUTU PLAN, AND SAID

THAT PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS, AFTER STRESSING AGAIN THE
TWIN PRECONDITIONS OF A SOUND BANK OF ZAIRE AND FINANCIAL
ORTHODOXY, AGREED THAT BELGIUM WOULD FULFILL THAT NEEDED
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ROLE. TINDEMANS TOLD MOBUTU THAT BELGIUM WAS PREPARED
TO CONVEY A MEETING IN BRUSSELS IN ORDER TO BEGIN INTER-
NATIONAL CONSULTATION TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
MOBUTU PLAN PROVIDING THAT ALL COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS
INVOLVED ARE STILL IN AGREEMENT. ONKELINX REPEATED WHAT
CHEF DE CABINET CAHEN HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD US (REF D), I.E.
THAT JOURNIAC HAD TOLD OUTERS AND ONKELINX IN PARIS THAT
THE FRENCH FULLY SUPPORTED THE BELGIAN INITIATIVE.
ONKELINX TOLD US THAT THE FRENCH DID ASK THAT THE BRUSSELS
MEETING BE HELD OFF UNTIL AFTER THE FRENCH ELECTIONS.
HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW IF THE BELGIANS WOULD BE
ABLE TO HOLD OFF THAT LONG, AND SAID THAT TECHNICAL LEVEL
MEETINGS MIGHT BE CONVENED IN BRUSSELS IN EARLY MARCH,
BEFORE THE FRENCH ELECTIONS, WITH A POSSIBLE SECOND MEETING
"AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL" BEING HELD LATER ON.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: ONKELINX STRESSED THAT THE BELGIANS
ARE MOVING SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY ON QUESTION OF THE BRUSSELS
MEETINGS AND DO NOT YET HAVE A CLEAR IDEA AS TO HOW THEY
SHOULD BE CONSTITUTED. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THEY WERE
STUDYING THE IDEA OF TWO MEETINGS, THE FIRST AT THE
TECHNICAL LEVEL WITH VIRTUALLY NO PUBLICITY (HE MENTIONED
AF/C DIRECTOR JUNIOR AS A POSSIBLE PARTICIPANT),
AND THEN A LATER MEETING "AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL" TO
APPROVE THE INITIAL WORK OF THE FIRST CONSULTATION. HE
SAID BELGIUM WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE WASHINGTON'S VIEWS
ON HOW WE SEE THIS CONSULTATION PROCESS DEVELOPING, INCLUD-
ING THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TWO MEETINGS.

7. ONKELINX STRESSED THAT A KEY UNKNOWN ELEMENT THAT
IMPINGES ON THE WHOLE MOBUTU PLAN SCENARIO IS THE OUTCOME
OF THE FORTHCOMING IMF NEGOTIATION WITH ZAIRE THAT IS
DUE TO BEGIN IN KINSHASA IN MARCH. HE SAID THAT TINDEMANS
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AND SIMONET HAD RAISED WITH MOBUTU THE "DISAPPOINTING"
RESULTS OF THE JANUARY IMF FACT-FINDING MISSION TO ZAIRE
AND HAS STRESSED TO HIM THE KEY IMPORTANCE OF THE IMF
NEGOTIATIONS TO THE MOBUTU PLAN. ONKELINX SAID THAT
MOBUTU SEEMED AWARE OF IMPORTANCE OF THE IMF IN THE WHOLE
SCENARIO AND HAD PASSED OFF THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE

JANUARY IMF MISSION TO KINSHASA AS THE RESULT OF ITS
HAVING BEEN LED BY ZAMBIANS AND MALIS, WHO MOBUTU TESTILY
SAID WOULD DO BETTER TO PUT THEIR OWN COUNTRIES IN ORDER
BEFORE FINDING FAULT WITH ZAIRE.

8. ONKELINX TOLD US THAT MOBUTU ASKED THE BELGIANS TO
PROVIDE EXPERTS TO IMPLEMENT THE REFORMS OF THE CUSTOMS
SERVICE AS RECOMMENDED IN THE WATERINCKX REPORT OF LAST
YEAR. TINDEMANS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO DO THIS, AND
INSTRUCTED OUTERS TO WORK ON IMPLEMENTATION. MOBUTU TOLD
THE BELGIANS THAT THE FRENCH HAD AGREED TO PROVIDE EXPERTS
TO IMPLEMENT THE REFORMS OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE WHICH
WERE CALLED FOR IN THE TOULEMON REPORT.

9. WE ASKED BOTH LE BRUN AND ONKELINX WHETHER THE
BELGIANS HAD RAISED WITH MOBUTU THE OLD PRE-CONDITION
OF CONTROLLING OR LIMITING THE PRESIDENTIAL
SLUSH FUND (DOTATION PRESIDENTIELLE) WHICH HAD BEEN DROPPED
FROM THE BELGIAN REPETOIRE AFTER MOBUTU'S SHARP REACTION
IN DECEMBER. ONKELINX SAID THAT THE BELGIANS DID NOT
RAISE POINT WITH MOBUTU THIS TIME, BUT STILL CONSIDERED
THAT THE CONCEPT IS UNDER THE FINANCIAL ORTHODOXY RUBRIC
AND HOPE TO RAISE IT AT AN APPROPRIATE FUTURE TIME. LE
BRUN STATED THAT MOBUTU WOULD "NEVER" ACCEPT ANY LIMITATIONS
ON HIS DIRECTION OF FUND, AND SAID THAT HE DID NOT
THINK THAT THE BELGIANS WOULD DARE RAISE IT WITH HIM AGAIN.

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10. RESPONDING TO OUR COMMENT ABOUT SOME NEGATIVE PRESS TREATMENT DURING THE MOBUTU VISIT, ONKELINX SAID IT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN THE USUAL GRUMBLING ABOUT MOBUTU'S "CORRUPTION" AND INCLUDED NO ATTACKS ON THE BELGIAN PLANS FOR RESPONDING TO ZAIRE'S PLEA FOR HELP. HE CHARACTERIZED THE POLITICAL STRESSES IN BELGIUM CAUSED BY BELGIUM'S ZAIRE POLICY AS "MANAGEABLE FOR THE TIME BEING."

11.ONKELINX SAID THAT THE BELGIAN PRIVATE SECTOR HAD COME OUT OF A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH MOBUTU IN POSITIVE SPIRITS, NOTING THAT MOBUTU'S DECISION BEFORE COMING TO BRUSSELS TO DIVEST HIMSELF OF THE CONTROVERSIAL CELZA PLANTATION PROPERTIES HAD CLEARED THE ATMOSPHERE SUBSTANTIALLY. HE ADDED THAT THE EXPERTS OF THE BELGO-ZAIRE GRAND COMMISSION DUTIFULLY HAD REVIEWED FEBRUARY 9-10 THE WHOLE GAMUT OF BILATERAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING RETROCESSION AND COMPENSATION FOR ZAIRIANIZED BELGIAN ASSETS AND THE MATTER OF LONG OVERDUE PAYMENTS TO SABENA, BUT THE WHOLE EXERCISE WAS ESSENTIALLY ACADEMIC
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DUE TO THE VIRTUAL PARALYSIS OF ZAIRIAN OF PAYMENTS. LE BRUN TOLD US THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS SIMONET AND UMBA HAD OPENED THE MEETING WITH FINE SPEECHES BUT THEN HAD ABANDONED THE CHAMBERS, NEVER TO REAPPEAR AGAIN DURING THE TWO-DAY SESSION. CHAMBERS

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Message Attributes

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